ABSTRACT

An interactive entertainment system has a program provider which distributes video content programs to multiple subscribers over a distribution network. Each subscriber has a user interface unit which receives the digital video program and converts it for display on a television, monitor, or other display unit. The user interface unit has a processor and memory. An electronic programming guide (EPG) resides in the memory and is executable on the processor to organize programming information that is descriptive of the programs supplied over the interactive entertainment system. The EPG supports a user interface (UI) which visually correlates programs titles to scheduled viewing times. A hyperlink browser also resides in memory and is executable on the processor. One or more hyperlinks, which reference target resources containing interactive content related to the video programs, are integrated as part of the EPG UI. The hyperlinks can be placed in the program tiles, channel tiles, or description area, and can be situated alone or embedded within other text. When a viewer activates a hyperlink within the EPG, the user interface unit launches the browser to activate the target resource specified by the hyperlink. The data retrieved from the target resource is then displayed on the display unit. The viewer can also drag a particular program or channel label from its location within the EPG UI and drop the label at another location on the display unit. This drag-and-drop operation associates an instruction with the label that will execute in response to activation of the label. The instruction might cause the visual display unit to tune to the program or channel represented by the particular label, or to initiate procedures to record the program when it begins playing, or to jump to a related target resource, such as a Web site.